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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/31/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PNAT](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: PM HEADING TO BASRAH TO ADDRESS SECURITY,  
DETERMINED TO NAME SECURITY MINISTERS BY JUNE 4

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad per 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Maliki will focus on security during his May 31 trip to Basrah. Maliki said he will announce his nominees for Minister of Defense and Interior at the next session of parliament (either June 1 or June 4. The leading candidate for MOI now appears to be Farouq Al-Araji. Mohammad Bara Rubaei and Abdul Qader Jassim Al-Mufraji appear to be the two top candidates for MOD, with PM Maliki still mulling three others: Saadoun Dulaimi, former Deputy Prime Minister Abid Mutlaq Al-Jaburi, and a new possibility, Nabil Khalil Saeed. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S) PM Maliki told Ambassador May 30 that he would visit Basrah the next day to address the deteriorating security situation there. Maliki said he intends to meet with a range of local leaders, including the ulema, governor, advisors, and political leaders. In addition, Maliki plans to form an emergency committee for security in Basrah. The current chief of police in Basrah is weak, Maliki explained, and needs to be replaced; likewise, the governor should be changed as he is a "bad man." The Ambassador encouraged the PM in this effort and noted the need for agreement among the warring Shia parties and their militias, as well as the need to strengthen the police that are operating like gangs. Maliki agreed.

¶3. (S) Following Maliki's comment on the need for a new governor in Basrah, the Ambassador asked him whether he intends to go forward with or delay provincial elections. The PM said that he intends to fulfill the constitutional requirement that the parliament must issue instructions for elections within three months after the new government is formed.

¶4. (S) Ambassador then asked about state of play on selection of new Ministers of Interior and Defense. Maliki answered that he had told his own coalition that his patience is exhausted and that he has concluded they will never agree on a single candidate. They recognize the deadlock, Maliki said, and told him to announce candidates and they would vote for them in the parliament session. Maliki said he would take two names to Parliament in its next session on Sunday, June 4. The Ambassador said that he thought that parliament would meet Thursday, June 1; if so, Maliki said, he would do it then.

¶5. (S) For MOI, the PM asked the Ambassador's views of Farouq Al-Araji. Ambassador said that we do not oppose him, although we know very little about him.

¶6. (S) For MOD, the PM said he wants Mohammad Bara Al-Rubaei or Abdul Qader Jassim Al-Mufraji -- but he thinks the Kurds have a problem with Abdul Qader. The Ambassador advised Maliki that if he likes both equally, to go with Abdul Qader,

who appears to be stronger, since we have some concerns about Mohammad Bara. Ambassador undertook to talk to Barzani to get the Kurds on board. Maliki then asked for the Ambassador's views of Saadoun Dulaimi, Abid Mutlak Al Jaburi, or a new candidate, Nabeel Khalil Saeed. Ambassador expressed no enthusiasm for any of these candidates, but agreed he would see the new candidate the next day. (BIO NOTE: LTG Nabeel Khalil Saeed currently serves as MOD Director General for Veterans Affairs; was a Division commander prior to the invasion of Kuwait; is a Sunni resident in Baghdad but his family is from Mosul; his father was a distinguished general thirty years ago; he is politically independent and highly respected by other officers; was educated at Sandhurst and speaks English; and was Iraq's first military attache in Washington in the 70s. Source: Sayyid Awad Jamal Al-Deen. END BIO NOTE.)

KHALILZAD